



Carlow Outdoor Activity Trail



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GOLF

- 1 Borris Golf Club
- 2 Bunclody Golf & Fishing Club
- 3 Carlow Golf Club
- 4 Mount Wolsley Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort
- 5 Quinagh House Par 3

LOOPED WALKS

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- 7 Clogrennane Wood
- 8 Clashganny Forest
- 9 Bahana Forest
- 10 Gowlin Forest
- 11 Kilbrannish Forest South Recreation Area
- 12 Kilbrannish Forest North Recreation Area
- 13 Deerpark

LONG DISTANCE WALKS

-  The Wicklow Way
-  The Barrow Way
-  South Leinster Way
-  The Columban Way



Visit us online at: www.carlowtourism.com



St Mullins Bike Hire

Discover one of County Carlow's most captivating places on two wheels with St Mullins Bike Hire, located on the historic quayside of St Mullins. Set in a remarkable seventeenth-century ecclesiastical village – and beside the very place where construction of the Barrow navigation system began over 250 years ago – this is a starting point steeped in both heritage and natural beauty.

From here, cyclists can slip onto the Barrow Way to experience one of Ireland's most unique routes. Following the country's second-longest river system, this peaceful, unspoilt trail offers a real escape where birdsong replaces traffic noise and every bend reveals another sweep of meandering water, woodland and wildlife.

For those wishing to explore further, St Mullins also connects to a network of quiet, low-trafficked country roads perfect for relaxed cycling. These scenic routes lead to the nearby villages of Glynn and Drummond – or further afield if you wish – offering a relaxed way to discover the rural character and rolling landscapes of south Carlow at your own pace.

St Mullins Bike Hire provides a selection of quality bicycles to suit all ages and abilities, and the friendly team is on hand to help you choose the right bike and advise on the most scenic stretches to explore.

The hire base is shared with the much-loved Mullichain Café, an idyllic riverside spot to enjoy delicious food before or after your cycle – the perfect place to watch the river drift by and soak up the peace and tranquillity of this beautiful setting.



Address: St Mullins Bike Hire, The Mullicháin Café, The Quay, St Mullins, Co. Carlow R95 XY93

T: +353 (0)51 424440

E: mullichaincafe@gmail.com

www.themullichaincafe.ie

Facilities: Sturdy and comfortable leisure (hybrid) bikes. Suitable for light trails including The Barrow Way. Adult, kids and family-friendly options.

Open: Weekends in February and daily from March to October

Make a day of it – other activities in St Mullins include the Barrow Way Walking route (pg. 15) and the Heron Sauna (pg. 35).



Go With The Flow River Adventures

Go With The Flow River Adventures bring the beautiful River Barrow to life. As you canoe through stunning yet tranquil countryside, expect to see magnificent weirs and waterfalls, old lock keepers' cottages, castles, 250-year-old navigation channels, charming and historic towns and villages, an abundance of river and wildlife and secluded spots for a picnic, quiet dip or a wild swim.

This is a family run, adventure activity business established by Charlie Horan offering affordable, guided canoe trails, canoe hire and canoe holidays on the picturesque River Barrow. No experience is required and the adventure of a canoeing holiday is open to all ages and abilities. A keen and positive team of qualified instructors bring the river to life in an interesting and meaningful way, ensuring good, safe and simple fun on the water.

You will have a wonderful experience on the River Barrow, with tours tailored to your needs, whether that be a whitewater half-day, full of thrills, spills, fun and laughter or a one- or two-day guided and certified eco adventure. Visitors can also choose a half-day interpretive tour with all kinds of stories, history and interesting insights or the Tranquillity Trail, with a unique combination of walking and canoeing activities.

All activities are suitable for families, sporting organisations, schools, youth and learning groups, corporate team building, charities and stag and hen parties.

T: +353 (0)87 252 9700

E: info@gowiththeflow.ie

www.gowiththeflow.ie

Facilities: Wet suits, safety equipment, changing facilities, full tuition from qualified, experienced and friendly guides.

How to find us: Various stretches along the River Barrow and also The Lock House, Clashganny, Borris, Co. Carlow.

Open: Year round



**1001 THINGS TO DO ON THIS EARTH
BEFORE YOU DIE - BOATING DOWN
THE RIVER BARROW**





Paddle Your Own Canoe

Hire a canoe and paddle down the River Barrow through some of Ireland's most scenic and beautiful landscapes and locations. During your adventure you will pass through lush countryside, rolling hills and forests and by mountain ranges including Mount Leinster, the Blackstairs and Brandon Hill.

Beautiful riverside towns and villages offer ample opportunity for shopping, eating and enjoying a pint or two of Guinness in any of the unique, authentic and even famous pubs. You will pass by historic sites including country houses, castles, excellent examples of industrial heritage and monastic sites including Borris House, the 7th century monastic site in St Mullins, Milford Mills and the White Castle.

The supplied two-man open Canadian canoe has enough room to store luggage, paddles, buoyancy aides, helmets, camping gear, dry bags, watertight barrels, tents, sleeping mats and kelly kettles. Riverside B&B or hotel accommodation is available en-route. There is an abundance of wildlife on this river with plenty of opportunities to see otters, egrets, herons, kingfishers, salmon, trout and many more. A longer six-day adventure starts in Monasterevin in County Kildare and finishes in New Ross in County Wexford covering 107km, passing through eight different towns and villages along the way. The river also has a 250-year-old navigation system which means there is a tow/walking path running parallel to the river, making it safe and convenient to get off the water at any time. Suitable for beginners and more experienced canoeists, ideal for friends, romantic couples, families, and stag or hen adventures.



Address: Barrow Valley Activities Hub,
Graigueanamanagh, Co. Kilkenny, R95 EKN5

T: +353 (0)87 414 0461

E: info@paddleyourowncanoe.ie

www.paddleyourowncanoe.ie

Facilities: Transport to/from the start/finish of each tour, canoes and all safety gear, dry bags and barrels, tents and other camping needs.

How to find us: The Barrow Valley Activities Hub is located on the outskirts of Graigueanamanagh, just off the R705 Graigueanamanagh – New Ross road. Pedestrian access is also available beside the bridge in Graigueanamanagh, via Quay Street in the town centre.

Open: Year round





Pure Adventure



Address: The Quay, Graiguenamanagh,
Co. Kilkenny, R95 DW66

Contact: Patrick McCormack

T: +353 (0)87 226 5550

E: info@pureadventure.ie

www.pureadventure.ie

Facilities: All wet gear, canoes, kayaks,
paddle boards and safety equipment.

How to find us: In the town of
Graiguenamanagh – follow R705 from Borris

Open: Public trips June – September



Get your adrenaline flowing with whitewater kayaking from Pure Adventure. Specialists in exceptional outdoor experiences and training in outdoor sports, Pure Adventure is based in Graiguenamanagh on the banks of the River Barrow in the heart of the Barrow Valley. It's a family run business, bringing you passion, experience and trained quality instructors.

Whether it's whitewater kayaking or a gentler canoeing tour of the River Barrow, you will be able to enjoy the weirs and rapids of Ireland's second longest river. Breathe in the scenic beauty of the wooded river valley and discover the historical transport route of the Barrow Navigation system.

Stand Up Paddle Boarding is one of the most relaxing water activities and gives a real sense of the wilderness, tradition, and adventure associated with a trip along the River Barrow. The feeling of walking on water is hard to beat as you watch kingfishers buzz by, herons fishing on rocks, and an otter swimming around.

Pure Adventure offers something for everyone and the classic canoe tour takes visitors along the River Barrow in the most relaxing way possible. You will glide from the river to the canal, utilising the 250-year-old lock system to descend as far as the historic village of St Mullins where you can step off the water and straight into a beautiful riverside café.





Angling on the River Barrow and Slaney

The River Barrow is renowned as a coarse and game angling river for bream, roach, dace, hybrids, rudd, perch and pike, brown trout, sea trout and salmon. The river has easy access points via a towpath. A strict catch and release policy applies in respect of all salmon, while the river is closed for all eel fishing. The salmon and brown trout season on the River Barrow commences on March 17th and finishes on September 30th. Other fishing (with the exception of salmon and brown trout) is available year round.

The rivers Greese and Lerr, tributaries of the River Barrow, provide excellent brown trout fishing while the River Burrin is one of the finest trout fishing rivers in the region. The excellent stocks of quality pike are one of the main attractions for anglers on the River Barrow, with stocks of 20+lbs. Pike angling is carried out on all stretches of the river between Athy and St Mullins with the main locations being Bahana Wood, just above St Mullins, Graiguenamanagh and Ballytiglea Bridge near Borris. Pike, bream and hybrids are the primary species but rudd is also abundant here. It is vital to make oneself familiar with the pike regulations, prior to fishing for pike.

The River Barrow is truly the last remaining fishery for twaite shad where they still enter in large numbers. They are normally caught by spinning but can also be caught on the fly and a competition is held at St Mullins each May. All anglers are encouraged to use barbless hooks if possible. A state licence is only required to fish for salmon and sea trout. Available from Murph's, Tullow Street, Carlow

T: +353 (0)59 913 2839 www.fishingtackledirect.ie
For further information visit www.fisheriesireland.ie
E: info@fisheriesireland.ie T: +353 (0)1 884 2600

The River Slaney is one of Ireland's premier wild fisheries, flowing through the heart of County Carlow, offering a memorable angling experience in beautiful natural surroundings. Renowned for its wild brown trout, sea trout and Atlantic salmon, the river attracts anglers from across Ireland and beyond. Around Tullow and the surrounding countryside, peaceful riverbanks and crystal-clear waters provide the perfect setting for a day's angling. Fishing is managed by local angling clubs and private fisheries, with day permits available on selected stretches.

Murph's Fishing Tackle

Murph's Fishing Tackle is the ideal outlet for supplies of all types of fishing equipment – for the serious and not so serious angler. Supplying fresh maggots, casters, worms, groundbait Sensas, Van Den Eynde and trapper. Stockists of a large selection of reels, rods, lures and fishing accessories. Information on fishing in the local area is provided for all fishing needs.

Cathedral Close, Tullow Street, Carlow, R93 P7XO

T: 059 913 2839 E: murphs10@hotmail.com

www.fishingtackledirect.ie

WhatsApp: 085 121 0262

Southern County FISHING RESORT

Discover the tranquillity of Southern County Fishing Resort, a beautiful retreat nestled in the heart of County Carlow, where nature, relaxation and outdoor experiences come together. This scenic resort features three well-stocked lakes, offering excellent trout and carp fishing in a peaceful and picturesque setting. With beautiful walks, peaceful picnic areas and nature all around, Southern County Fishing Resort is the ideal destination for a relaxing break, a fishing getaway and a chance to escape the pace of everyday life.

Milltown, Garryhill, Bagenalstown,
Co. Carlow R21 C793

T: 059 915 7773 / 087 965 5544
E: southerncountyresort@gmail.com



Mountain Adventures 74

Mountain Adventures 74 is a multilingual outdoor company based just outside Tullow, County Carlow, offering a wide range of guided hikes, and on and off trails during day and night time, for all levels. Specialising in the local area, they provide unforgettable day hikes across the Blackstairs Mountains, Mount Leinster and the surrounding countryside, where participants can enjoy the area's dramatic landscapes, panoramic views and tranquil valleys.

All activities are led by fully insured and qualified mountain leaders for Ireland and the UK, holding REC 3 first aid qualifications, ensuring safety and professionalism at every step.

For those looking to broaden their adventure, Mountain Adventures 74 also offers guided trips further afield, including day guided hikes in the Wicklow Mountains and Comeragh Mountains, and weekend hiking experiences to Kerry, Connemara, The Mourne Mountains and Donegal. In addition guided hikes are provided to corporate companies and schools. Every trip is designed to combine challenge, enjoyment and connection with Ireland's spectacular mountain scenery.

As an accredited course provider for Mountaineering Ireland and the Mountain Training Board, they run Mountain Skills Level 1 and 2 courses twice per month. They also provide Lowland Leader and Hill and Moorland Leader award training in the Myshall and Blackstairs Mountains area and other course locations in Ireland. These courses equip participants with essential navigation and mountain skills, helping them become confident and competent in Ireland's mountains, the UK and beyond.

Address: Mountain Adventures 74, Killcross,
Tullow, Co. Carlow

M: 087 969 1193

E: aeaccom@gmail.com
or info@mountainadventures74.com

www.mountainadventures74.com
BOOK IN ADVANCE





Blackstairs Eco Trails

Blackstairs Eco Trails is an award-winning and family-owned, eco-tourism business based in the Blackstairs Mountains. Guests can choose from a range of unique experiences, from luxurious stays in four charming shepherds' huts to immersive activities exploring the Celtic Tree Trail and foraging workshops in the Blackstairs Mountains or along the Barrow Way. An old barn, dating from 1831, has been renovated into a dedicated centre for all walks, seminars, workshops and school visits and is surrounded by meadows and a lovely rose and water garden.

Robert and Mary White lead visitors on a two-hour foraging walk through the lovely lanes, lowlands, bogs and streams of this area looking at the natural topography of the landscape, the local archaeology which includes some fine standing stones and cairns and the splendid flora and fauna. Lichens and mosses, grasses and ferns, birds, mammals and butterflies are all presented in an easy-to-follow, yet highly entertaining and educational manner. Otters, kingfishers and the little dipper who likes nesting under the many stone bridges in County Carlow all await discovery.

The unique Celtic Tree Trail explores the relationship of the Celts with Ireland's native trees. This guided experience combines storytelling, gentle walking and interpretation, bringing to life the importance of Ireland's native trees in Celtic culture. Visitors learn about the classification of trees – such as the revered “noble” species – and discover their roles in mythology, folklore and daily life over 2,500 years ago. The trail includes an introductory talk and short film before leading guests through woodland landscapes, including a young oak forest and an Ogham stone, where the ancient tree alphabet is revealed.

Beautifully crafted and thoughtfully designed, four charming shepherds' huts combine rustic charm with modern comfort, providing a cosy, intimate retreat set in grassland. Immediately adjacent is the old barn where bathroom facilities are available and breakfast is served each morning.



Address: The Old Rectory, Killedmond, Borris, Co. Carlow, R95 N1K7

Contact: Robert and Mary White

T: +353 (0)59 977 3184

M: +353 (0)87 270 7189

E: info@blackstairsecotrails.ie

www.blackstairsecotrails.ie

Facilities: Boot room, bathroom, wet room with disabled access, four shepherds' huts, kitchen, a demonstration island unit and a large meeting area. Suitable for corporate and work groups.



One of 11 recipients of a Gold Standard by Eco Tourism Ireland.

Introduction to Barrow, South Leinster, Columban and Wicklow Ways

Carlow is a treasure trove of walking routes, offering something for everyone – from leisurely strollers to seasoned hikers. Throughout the county you'll find an exceptional variety of looped walks, gentle riverside trails and exhilarating long-distance routes that showcase Carlow's remarkable scenery, heritage and biodiversity.

The beautiful Barrow Way, a 114 km-long route beginning in Robertstown, County Kildare, follows tranquil riverside towpaths all the way to the monastic village of St Mullins in south Carlow. As you reach its very southern stretches, the landscape takes on a dramatic, valley-like character, with the Blackstairs Mountains rising on one side and the River Barrow flowing gracefully on the other.

Carlow is also home to the start of **The Columban Way**, a remarkable long-distance spiritual pilgrimage route tracing the journey of St Columbanus, to Bangor in County Down.

The South Leinster Way begins in Kildavin in east Carlow and travels as far as Carrick-on-Suir in County Tipperary. This impressive route passes by Mount Leinster (795m), the highest peak in the Blackstairs Mountains, and offers breathtaking views of Brandon Hill and the Barrow Valley.

The renowned **Wicklow Way** concludes in the Carlow village of Clonegal, having passed mountain lakes and rolling countryside from its start point in Marley Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin.



EastWest Mapping is a Carlow based map publisher who produce detailed topographic maps for many parts of Ireland. Their flagship product for exploring much of County Carlow is 'The Blackstairs & Mount Leinster' – a 1:25,000 scale map, available in both paper and waterproof

versions for the Irish weather. This detailed and essential map covers from Myshall to St Mullins and from Borris across the Blackstairs Mountains to Bunclody. Many of the walking routes covered in this activity guide are shown in greater detail on this map. Along with a richness of local placenames and heritage features, this map is essential for those who wish to explore localities and those engaged in family research. Available online from www.eastwestmapping.ie or in person from Carlow Tourist Office.



LOC8 Emergency Access Points are a network of clearly marked reference locations positioned across the Barrow Way walking route and other heritage sites. Supported by Carlow County Council, each point carries a unique code that can be shared with ambulance, fire or rescue services, ensuring faster response times. LOC8 enhances safety while encouraging people to confidently explore Carlow's rich landscapes and outdoor experiences. For information and to access the associated Point8 app go to www.loc8.ie

Practising a 'Leave no Trace' ethic is very simple. Make it hard for others to see or hear you and leave no trace of your visit.

Principles

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Be considerate of others
- Respect farm animals and wildlife
- Travel and camp on durable ground responsibly
- Leave what you find
- Dispose of waste properly
- Protect nature from fire



Map Key

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Post Office | Public House |
| Sauna | Restaurant/Café |
| Bus Stop | Canal Lock |
| Shop | River Boat Tours |
| Playground | Church |
| Train Station | Bike Hire |
| Stately Home | Fishing |
| Gardens | Picnic Area |
| Forest Walk | Scenic Walk |
| Heritage Site | Garden Centre |
| Castle | Canoeing |
| ATM | Accommodation |
| Barge Hire | Car Park |
| Graveyard | Road Access |
| Viewpoint | Road Access Point |

The Barrow Way

Following the peaceful towpath once used by horses to pull barges laden with goods, visitors can wander through an ever-changing landscape shaped by nature, heritage and rural life. Easy to explore, the route meanders through fertile farmland and quaint villages where time seems to move a little slower and each river bend reveals a new delight.

Along the way, walkers encounter charming lock houses, elegant arched bridges and remarkable reminders of the region's industrial past. With welcoming accommodation and local hospitality dotted along the route, the Barrow Way is the perfect place to pause, reconnect and truly wander off the track.

- A-B** Starting at the popular village and moorings at Robertstown, the Barrow Way follows the north side of the Grand Canal for a short distance. Cross the Grand Canal bridge at the lock in Lowtown, turn left and follow the Barrow Way signs along the right bank of the canal.
- B-C** Shortly after passing a canal junction, reach and cross the canal bridge opposite Ballyteague Castle and now follow the towpath on the south or left side of the Barrow Line canal. The Hill of Allen lies to the east en route to Rathangan 15km from the start.
- C-D** Continue on the left bank from Rathangan before reaching the whitewashed cottages by Macartney's Bridge and Lock. Monasterevin is reached after 24km.
- D-E** After Monasterevin switch to the right side of the canal and continue for a further 23km to Athy.

Trailhead: Robertstown

Services: See below and map

Distance/Time: 47km (12 hours) – more easily managed in two sections from Robertstown to Monasterevin (24km) and from there to Athy (23km)

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Road, track and river towpath

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: Tailte Éireann Map No. 49 and 55
www.tailte.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background.

Emergency Services: 999 or 112

Robertstown



Rathangan



Monasterevin

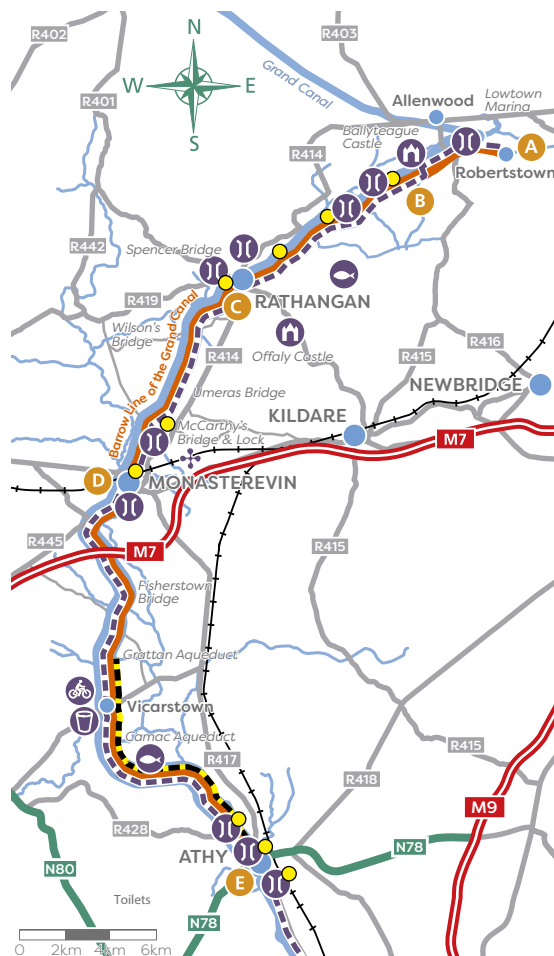


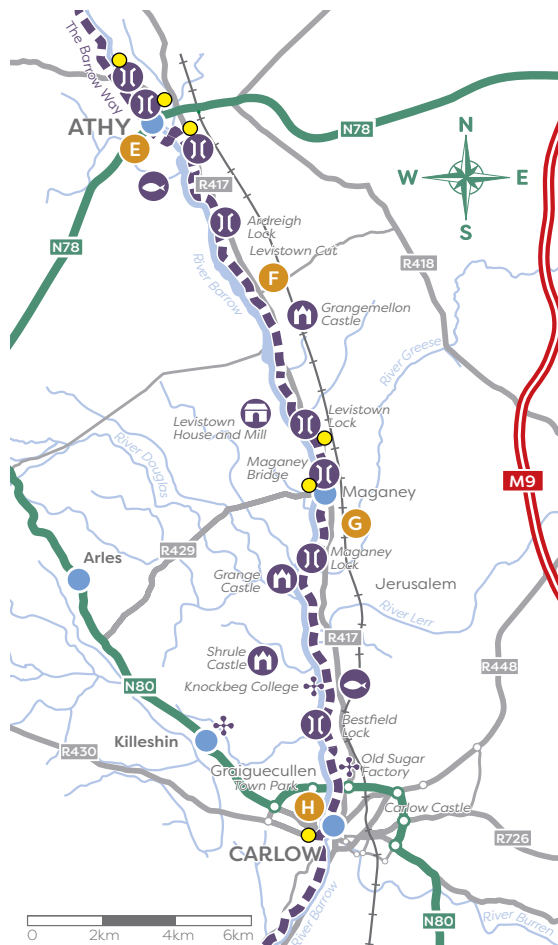
Athy



Robertstown to Athy

LOC8CODE
LOCATE NAVIGATE





The Barrow Way

- E-F** Athy has been an important crossing point of the River Barrow from early times and the town developed about 800 years ago around this ford and later bridge. A little below Athy, the Barrow Line canal joins the River Barrow properly and the Barrow Way runs on the left or east towpath of the river below this point.
- F-G** The River Barrow was used by shallow boats called cots for many centuries but in order to make the River Barrow navigable by larger boats, it was necessary in the 18th century to construct short canals or cuts to bypass steeper or rocky sections of the river. The Levinstown Cut is the first such canal the visitor meets and the longest at 3km+, it rejoins the River Barrow at Levinstown Lock, House and Mill. Each canal or cut has an associated lock to manage the fall or rise in river level. Levinstown Mill produced malted barley until it was closed by a fire in 1943. The malt was transported by barge to Dublin and the Guinness brewery. It is now used for generating electricity.
- G-H** The fine cut stone bridge of Maganey is passed halfway between Athy and Carlow. Just south of Maganey on the west bank is the site of Grange Castle while the 16th century Shrule Castle lies a little below this. As you approach Carlow Town, the site of Carlow Sugar Factory is passed on the left. This was a hive of activity, particularly in autumn and winter months from 1926 to its closure in 2007. It made good use of the river navigation and a small harbour was constructed for the loading and unloading of boats at the time.

Trailhead: Athy

Services: See below and map

Distance/Time: 20km/5 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Road, track and river towpath

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: Tailte Éireann Map No. 55 and 61
www.tailte.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail
– yellow arrow on black background

Emergency Services: 999 or 112

Athy



Carlow Town





The Barrow Way

- H-I** From Carlow the Barrow Way switches to the right or west bank of the River Barrow at Wellington or Graiguecullen Bridge. The 13th century Carlow Castle which protected the river crossing and around which Carlow Town developed, is well worth a visit. The landscape changes south of Carlow Town, flat plains are replaced by hills on either side with wooded valleys. The Castlecomer Plateau rises up on the west side. Below Carlow, the ruins of Clogrennan Castle and Clogrennan House, seat of the Rochforts can be seen on the right or west bank.
- I-J** Milford is a pleasant spot on the River Barrow and is particularly rich in plant and bird life – spot the herons, kingfishers and swallows among the many species of birds. The ruins of Milford Mill (1790-1965), established by the Alexander family are nearby and were once the site of a busy flour, malting and tannery business. In the 1890s the present day mill was used as a generating station for electricity with Carlow the first inland town in Ireland and the UK to have electric street lighting.
- J-K** Leighlinbridge is another old town built on a crossing point which was guarded by the Black Castle. The bridge at Leighlinbridge, built in 1320, is the oldest on the River Barrow and one of the oldest in Europe. The Barrow Way now switches to the left bank and as you leave the village behind, the ancient site of Dinn Righ lies up on your right, said to be a fort of one of the former Kings of Leinster. Bagenalstown is reached shortly after passing the outdoor swimming pool.

Trailhead: Carlow

Services: See below and map

Distance/Time: 18km/5 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Road, track and river towpath

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: Tailte Éireann Map No. 61
www.tailte.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail
– yellow arrow on black background.

Emergency Services: 999 or 112

Carlow Town



Leighlinbridge

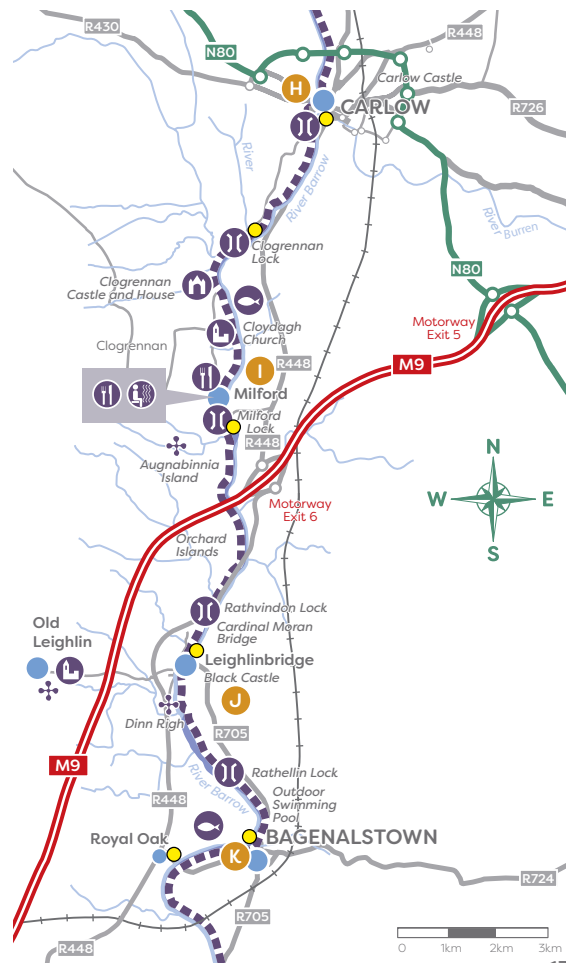


Bagenalstown



Carlow to Bagenalstown

LOC8CODE
LOCATE NAVIGATE





The Barrow Way

- K-L** A small village called Muine Bheag existed here in the Middle Ages but in the 18th century Walter Bagenal designed a new town, supposedly based on Versailles of France and called it Bagenalstown. Pleasing features of this period include the impressive courthouse, now a public library and a fine neo-classical railway station.
- L-M** Goresbridge named after Colonel Gore was built in 1756 and features a beautifully maintained picnic area and riverside park along with a café and waterways museum in a restored mill, adjacent to the river. Ballytiglia Lock and then Bridge is reached where you may exit if you wish to visit Borris. Borris is a Georgian, granite village, full of charm and heritage whose houses and Victorian shop fronts have remained largely intact. There is a wonderful 3.5km walk around and under the old Railway Viaduct at the end of the village, offering superb views to the Blackstairs Mountains and Mount Leinster. A dedicated car park and picnic area have been developed at the site.
- M-N** Continue on the towpath, with the wooded estate of Borris House on your left. Clashganny Lock and weir is reached some 6kms from Borris and is a popular beauty and picnic spot with wonderful walks through Clashganny Forest (see page 27). Approaching Graiguenamanagh the river begins to cut its way between the hills with attractive tree-lined slopes.

Trailhead: Bagenalstown

Services: See below and map

Distance/Time: 26km/7 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Road, track and river towpath

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: Tailte Éireann Map No. 61 & 68 www.tailte.ie and The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background.

Emergency Services: 999 or 112

Bagenalstown



Goresbridge



Borris



Graiguenamanagh/ Tinnahinch





The Barrow Way

- N** Graiguenamanagh is a busy town and a very popular mooring place on the River Barrow. It was once the hub of the barge transport business and many families plied that trade. Rail and road transport eventually replaced the barges, last used in 1959. As you leave the town you pass Tinnahinch Castle, a Butler stronghold built to defend the ford.
- O** This section may be short but it is full of beauty and drama with frequent weirs and the lofty Brandon Hill rising up to your right. It is popular with both walkers and people travelling the river by boat, Canadian canoe or kayak.
- P** Soon you reach the mighty St Mullins Weir, this and the following Sea Lock separate the tidal part of the River Barrow from the upper reaches that you have just followed. Below the Sea Lock boats must wait at St Mullins for the rising tide to start on their journey to New Ross and the sea.
- Q** St Mullins village is the start/finishing point of the Barrow Way. Leaving the quay and mill buildings behind, you soon reach the Norman Motte which is a high, man-made hill fortification. Opposite this are the ruins of the ancient Tigh Moling, the house of Moling, an early Christian missionary in Ireland who founded a monastery here in the 7th century. St Mullins is one of the country's most significant archaeological and ecclesiastical sites, ranking in importance with Glendalough and Clonmacnoise.

Trailhead: Graiguenamanagh

Services: See below and map

Distance/Time: 8 kilometres/2-3 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Road, track and river towpath

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: Tailte Éireann Map No. 61 & 68 www.tailte.ie and The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background

Emergency Services: 999 or 112

Graiguenamannagh/Tinnahinch

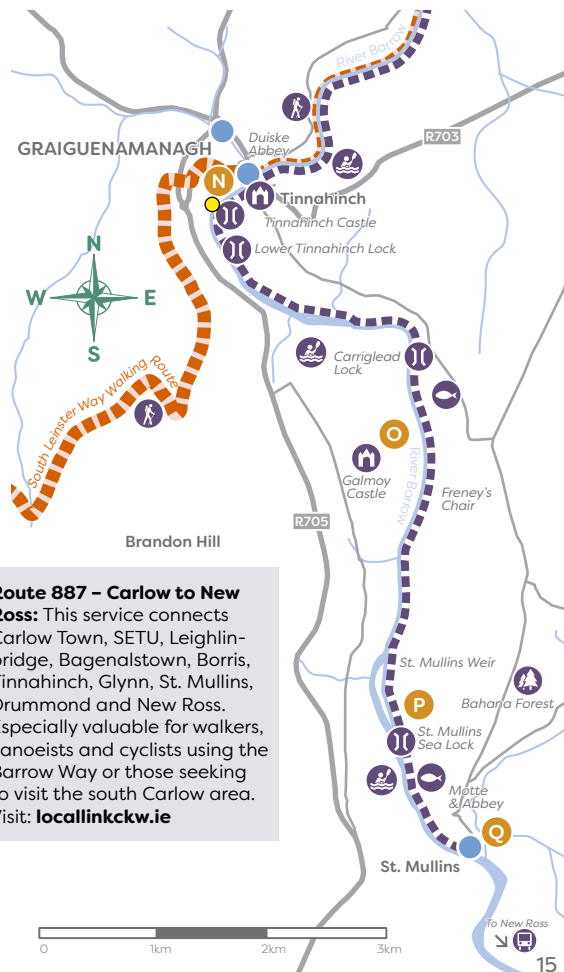


St Mullins



Graiguenamanagh to St Mullins

LOC8CODE
LOCATE NAVIGATE





The Columban Way traces its way from St Mullins in south Carlow, to the official birthplace of St Columbanus in the shadow of Mount Leinster on the Blackstairs Mountains. From there it continues to Bangor in County Down and eight countries of Europe to Bobbio in Northern Italy. Inspired by St Columbanus, the 6th century monk and pilgrim, the trail invites visitors to experience the stunning landscapes, stories and shared heritage of the Barrow Valley and Blackstairs Mountains, at a slower, more meaningful pace. Columbanus' messages, though delivered nearly 1,500 years ago, continue to have a remarkable relevance today.

With St Mullins located on a graceful bend of the River Barrow and overlooked by the Blackstairs Mountains to the east, this section of The Columban Way is characterised by a mix of tranquil woodland, weirs, locks and rolling hills. By following the Barrow Way towpath to the town of Borris, you will pass near the ruins of Ullard monastery founded by St Fiachra in the 7th century. The charming Georgian village of Borris with its old, granite houses and Victorian shop fronts is the perfect place to end your day's walking.

The Columban Way also weaves into a wider tapestry of early Christian heritage in Carlow, connecting with the stories of other saints including St Moling of St Mullins. 1400 years ago, St Moling established a monastic site here and created an enduring link with St James, patron saint of pilgrims. Having taken seven years to dig a water course from the Aughavaud River, he dedicated it on the feast day of St James. Ever since, and particularly during times of adversity, St Mullins has been a beloved place of pilgrimage.

Trailhead: St Mullins

Distance/Time: 20.1km/5 ½ hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Flat - this trail has some climbs and may have an uneven surface where the going is rough underfoot with some obstacles such as protruding roots, rocks etc. The routes are appropriate for people with a moderate level of fitness and some walking experience.

To Suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping
www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail
 – yellow arrow on black background

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



The Columban Way

The most elaborate piece of lace in the unique Borris House collection is the “Tree of Life”. Brought from Milan by Lady Harriet Kavanagh (1799-1885), this universal symbol connects northern Italy with Borris and the areas where the journey of St Columbanus began and ended. St Columbanus would have understood how this symbol reflects the connection between earth and heaven; just as the branches of a tree strengthen and grow, Columbanus’s learning, understanding and closeness to nature deepened as the years passed. Similarly, the seeds he planted along his journey in the form of monastic communities, flourished over the centuries.

From Borris, The Columban Way follows quiet roads before ascending steadily to the Nine Stones Viewing Point. There, a breathtaking vista of County Carlow’s beautiful countryside can be experienced. This is a landscape that St Columbanus would have known and loved in his youth almost 1,500 years ago. Locations like this obviously had a special meaning for him as he founded monasteries in very similar landscapes across Europe including Annegray and Luxeuil in France. The route descends past Corrabut Gap into the village of Myshall. Along the way, commanding views can be enjoyed across County Carlow and down to Myshall Village.

Trailhead: Borris

Distance/Time: 18.7km/5 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: This trail has some climbs and may have an uneven surface where the going is rough underfoot with some obstacles such as protruding roots, rocks etc. The routes are appropriate for people with a moderate level of fitness and some walking experience. Significant parts of the section from Borris to the Nine Stones are on quiet public roads and the walker must exercise care in the presence of traffic.

‘Life is a real road, broad for some and narrow for others.’

St Columbanus
Sermon 5

To Suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping
www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background.

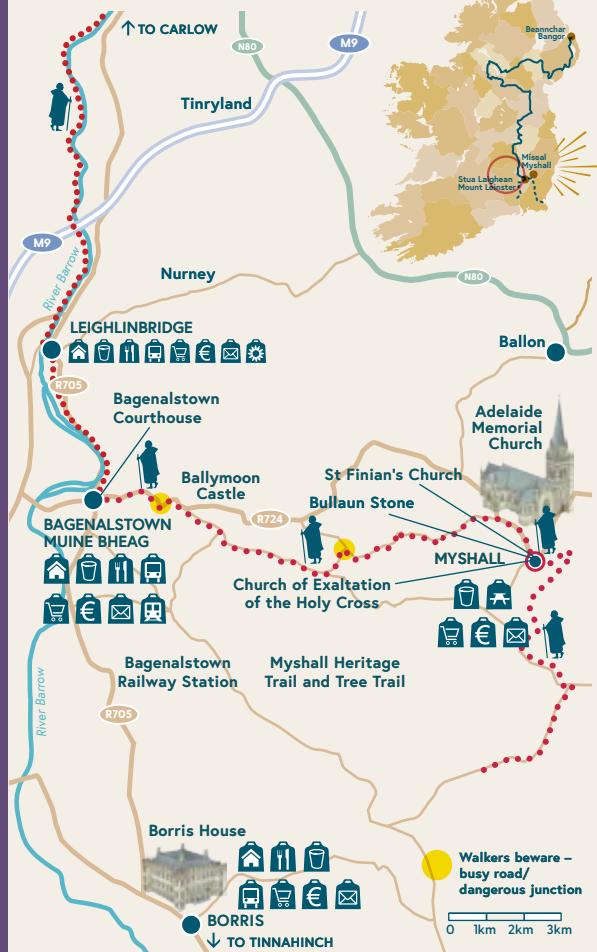
Emergency Services: 999 or 112

The Columban Way can also be walked from Carrigduff/Bunclody in County Wexford to the Nine Stones Viewing Point.

Borris to Myshall



Myshall to Bagenalstown



The Columban Way

Set beneath Mount Leinster, Myshall is closely linked with the early life of St Columbanus, who is believed to have been born nearby around 543. Today, the village offers visitors a rich blend of spiritual heritage and architectural beauty, most notably the striking Adelaide Memorial Church, inspired by Salisbury Cathedral. The nearby Church of Exaltation of the Holy Cross features a beautiful tapestry dedicated to St Columbanus along with his relic. The People's Park commemorates the legacy of both St Columbanus and St Finnian, who was born in the village and is known as the tutor of the saints of Ireland.

The route from Myshall to Bagenalstown occasionally follows busy roads and the various way markers should be observed by walkers. Bagenalstown is a historic market town, with its elegant, planned layout reflecting its 18th-century origins. Today, Bagenalstown serves as a welcoming stop along the Columban Way, where walkers can pause to enjoy its riverside setting. Bagenalstown is associated with another Irish saint, albeit it one less famous than Columbanus. St Lappán, whose feast day is November 3rd, was the eighth century founder of a monastery at Donore, 2km from here.

Trailhead: Myshall Village

Distance/Time: 14.6km/3 ½ hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Flat - this trail has some climbs and may have an uneven surface where the going is rough underfoot with some obstacles such as protruding roots, rocks etc. The routes are appropriate for people with a moderate level of fitness and some walking experience.

'Whether we
are Franks,
Irish or Britons
or whatever
people, we are
members of
one body.'

Letter of St Columbanus
to the French Bishops

To Suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping
www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background.

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



The Columban Way

From Bagenalstown to Carlow Town, the Columban Way follows the gentle course of the River Barrow, a landscape that reflects the importance of water in early Christian Ireland, where monasteries flourished along riverbanks and fertile valleys. This stretch offers a peaceful journey through rich agricultural land and quiet countryside, echoing the journeys of Columbanus and his companions, including St Willibrord, who is associated with the site of Rath Melsigi, 5km from the village of Leighlinbridge. A native of Northumbria who trained in the Irish monastic tradition for 12 years, Willibrord later left Rath Melsigi and became known as the 'Apostle of the Frisians', founding the monastery at Echternach and helping to spread Christianity across parts of present-day Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

This section of the route invites reflection on their missionary spirit, as these early monks travelled far from places like the Barrow Valley to spread learning, spirituality and faith across Europe. The trail leads onwards to Carlow Town, a place of historic significance with its impressive castle and long association with ecclesiastical life, marking a natural gathering point along the Columban Way.

Trailhead: Quayside in Bagenalstown

Distance/Time: 15.4km/4 ½ hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Generally flat – this trail has some climbs and may have an uneven surface where the going is rough underfoot with some obstacles, such as protruding roots, rocks etc. The routes are appropriate for people with a moderate level of fitness and some walking experience.

To Suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping www.eastwestmapping.ie

'Let us eat
with the poor,
drink with the
poor, share
with the poor.'

St Columbanus
Sermon Seven

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail
– yellow arrow on black background.

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



The relic of St Willibrord on display in Carlow Cathedral.

Bagenalstown to Carlow

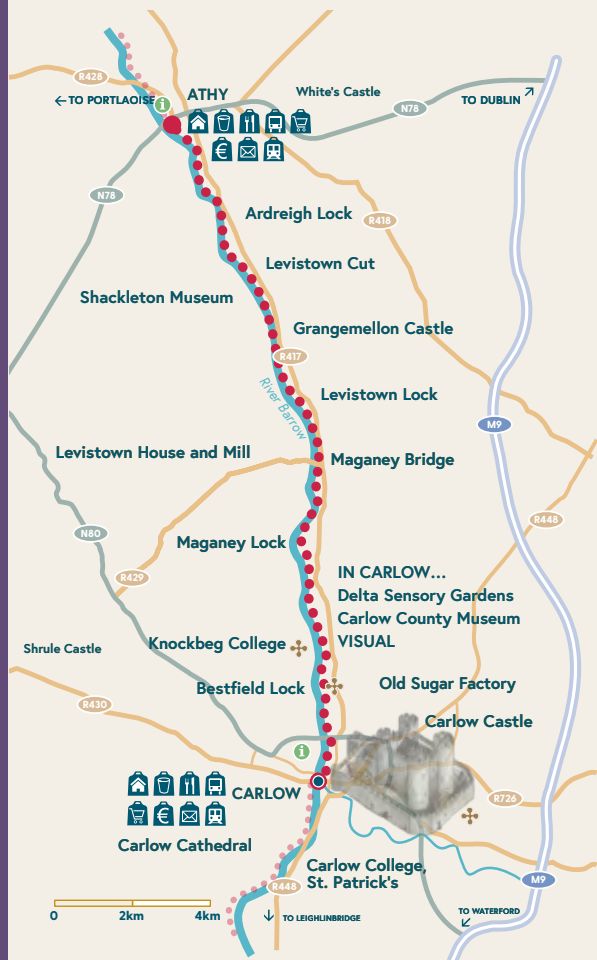
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'May no one
and no thing
separate us from
the love
of Christ.'

St Columbanus
Sermon Four



The teenage Columbanus, in an attempt to overcome temptation, is said to have turned to Croine Bheag, a local hermit, who lived in an area of Carlow called Templecrony (now known as Haymarket) and who was renowned for holiness.

Croine Bheag inspired Columbanus to become a missionary who went on to found monasteries in Luxeuil and Annegray in France, and Bobbio in Italy.

His missionary work would go on to have a very profound impact on Irish and European history, and the formation of the European Union can be traced to Columbanus.

Trailhead: Leighlinbridge quayside

Distance/Time: 18.1km/4 ½ hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: This trail has some climbs and may have an uneven surface where the going is rough underfoot with some obstacles such as protruding roots, rocks etc. The routes are appropriate for people with a moderate level of fitness and some walking experience.

To Suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: as per p.12

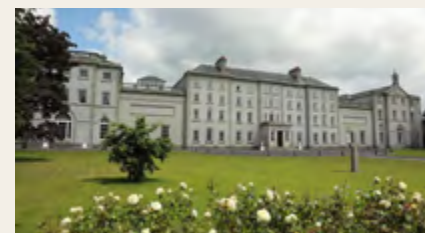
Map: Tailte Éireann Map No. 55 & 61
www.tailte.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail
– yellow arrow on black background.

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



Reconstruction of Carlow Castle in the late 14th century.



Carlow College, St. Patrick's.

The Columban Way continues through Laois, Kildare, Meath, Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh, Fermanagh and Down. www.columbanway.ie



South Leinster Way

The South Leinster Way is a long distance walking route which runs from Kildavin in the east of County Carlow to Carrick-on-Suir in County Tipperary, some 102km in length. Further details at www.irishtrails.ie.

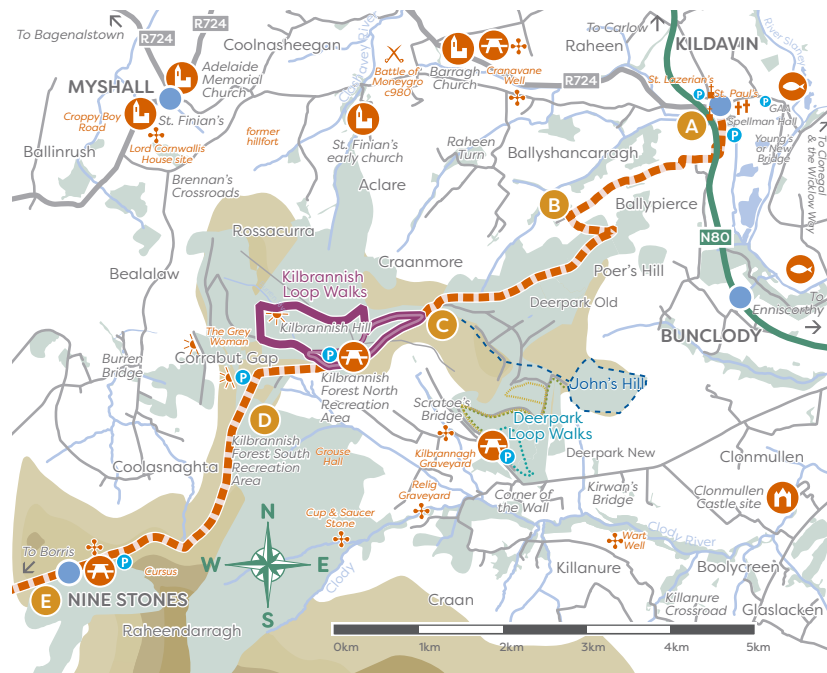
- A-B** From the trailhead beside Conway's Pub, follow the footpath south gently uphill towards Bunclody. After 500m, reach the main road and turn right to follow it for a short distance. Cross the main road to gain a minor tarmac road on the far side. Follow this for 2km as it climbs uphill.
- B-C** Reach Mount Leinster Cottages and turn left and steeply uphill on a rough unsurfaced track to enter a forest. Follow the forest road uphill to reach a junction after 500m. Turn right and follow the forest road as it climbs more gently along the slopes of the forested hillside. After 2.5km reach the crest of the hill and a short gap between two forests, that yields good views.
- C-D** From the crest of the hill, continue on downhill, passing a right turn after a short distance. There are signposted loop trails here, so take care to follow the yellow arrows. Continue on downhill for 1.5km to reach the Kilbrannish Forest Recreation car park. Turn right and follow the tarmac road with care uphill to reach Carroll's Crossroad just before Corrabut Gap.
- D-E** Turn left at Carroll's Crossroad and follow the tarmac mountain road with care. This climbs steadily with excellent views down into Coolasnaghta on your right. After 3km reach the large Nine Stones car park.

Borris

Kildavin **Myshall**

Bunclody

Kildavin to Nine Stones



Trailhead: Kildavin

Services: See below and map

Distance/Time: 11.6km (approx. 4 hrs)

Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Minor roadways, forestry tracks and hillside paths

Ascent: 475 metres

To suit: Experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Hiking boots, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Maps: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping
www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background.

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



South Leinster Way

E-F High above the rolling landscape of County Carlow, the Nine Stones Viewing Point is a place to pause, breathe deeply and take in the beauty of Ireland's Ancient East. From this spectacular vantage point, visitors can enjoy sweeping views across eight counties - and on a clear day, even catch a glimpse of the Welsh coastline. On the lower side of the road, you will see an alignment of nine small stones in the ground, said to commemorate nine shepherds lost on Mount Leinster in some distant winter storm. Continue on along the tarmac road from the Nine Stones car park which descends steadily, passing two notable landmarks: the White Stone on your right and later the Scabby House on your left just after a cattle grid. Reach Tomduff Crossroads.

F-G At Tomduff Crossroads, walk straight through two crossroad junctions. Nearby is the monument to the Tomduff Campfield, where a large force gathered in the 1798 rebellion. Continue downhill on a tarmac road to reach the T-junction of Cashel Crossroad. Turn right for a short distance and then left on a minor road.

G-H From Cashel Crossroad, the road continues to descend. Keep left at the next junction and drop downhill to reach Spahill Crossroad where you turn right. The road soon drops on the final descent to the village of Borris. There is a wonderful 3.5km walk around and under the old Railway Viaduct at the end of the village offering superb views to the Blackstairs Mountains and Mount Leinster. A dedicated car park and picnic area have been developed at the site.

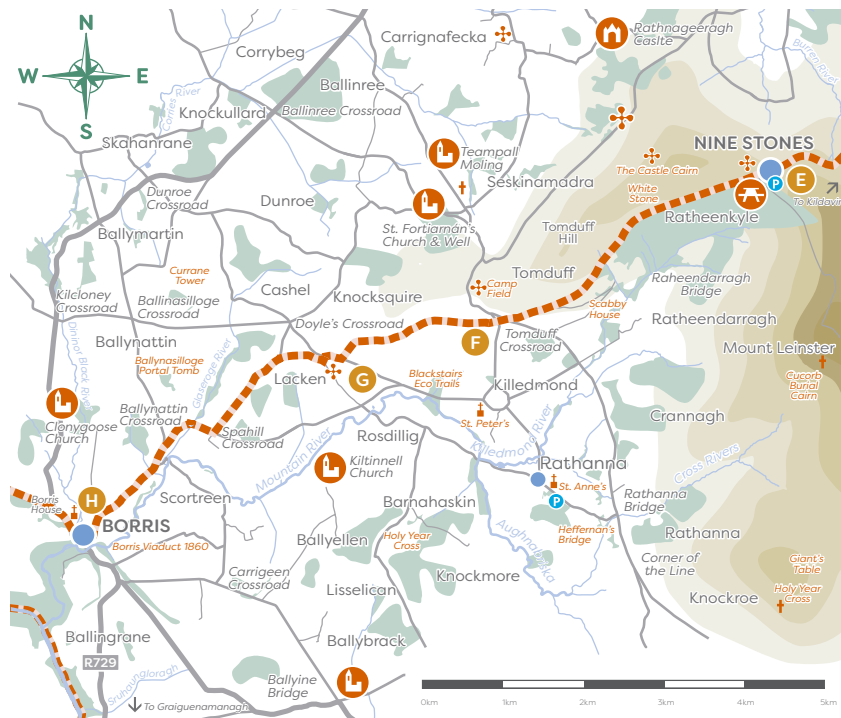
Borris



Rathanna



Nine Stones to Borris



Trailhead: Nine Stones

Distance/Time: 10.6km (3 hours)

Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Minor roadways, forestry tracks and hillside paths

Ascent: 20 metres

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Hiking boots, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Maps: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping
www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



South Leinster Way

- H-I** Walk uphill out of Borris on the main R702 towards Goresbridge. Historic Borris House, seat of the McMorrough Kavanaghs, former kings of Leinster is on your left.
- I-J** From Ballytiglea Bridge, keep left and follow the broad towpath downstream with the River Barrow on your right. A little further on, the Mountain River rushes in from your left and later you pass Ballingrane Lock. As you approach the scenic Clashganny Lock you will hear the roar of falling water from the adjacent weir.
- J-K** Continue on the towpath from Clashganny, the ruins of Clohastia Castle lie to the right, one of many Norman castles built to control navigation and crossing of the River Barrow. Reach Ballykeenan Lock and continue on following the yellow arrows, ignoring the local loop walks that turn left here. The wooded valley sides steepen on the next stretch and after a final sweeping bend, the historic town of Graiguenamanagh comes into view, with moored barges along granite quays and impressive old store houses. One of Ireland's finest Cistercian monasteries, Duiske Abbey, was founded here in 1204 by Norman monks from Stanley Abbey in Wiltshire.

Borris

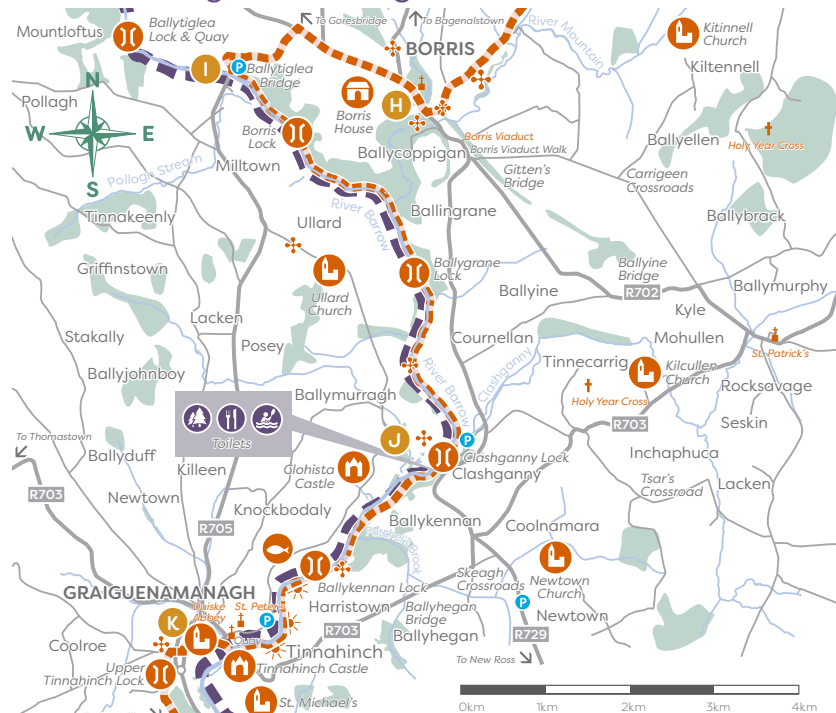


Graiguenamannagh/Tinnahinch



This route continues to Tipperary and route maps can be viewed at <https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/find-your-trails>

Borris to Graiguenamanagh



Trailhead: Borris

Distance/Time: 13.1km (3 hours)

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Minor roadways, forestry tracks and riverside paths

Ascent: 60 metres

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Hiking boots, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Maps: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping
www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



The Wicklow Way

Ireland's oldest waymarked long-distance walking route, the Wicklow Way stretches for over 130km from Marley Park in Dublin to the picturesque village of Clonbeg in County Carlow. The route takes walkers through some of the country's most spectacular scenery including the Dublin Mountains, Glendalough, deep forest trails, open mountain landscapes and peaceful rolling countryside.

As the trail approaches County Carlow from Tinahely in County Wicklow, the landscape gradually changes from upland mountain terrain to gentler hills and quiet country roads. This final 19km section offers a peaceful and rewarding conclusion to the journey, travelling through forests, farmland and secluded valleys before descending into Clonbeg, one of Ireland's most charming heritage villages. Along the route, walkers pass near the Derry River and through an area rich in natural beauty and biodiversity.

Clonbeg provides a fitting finale to the Wicklow Way. Situated on the River Derry on the Carlow/Wicklow border, the village is renowned for its attractive streetscape, welcoming atmosphere and historic character. Visitors can enjoy the award-winning Sha-Roe Bistro and friendly local pubs, while nearby Huntington Castle and Gardens offer visitors the opportunity to explore one of Ireland's most fascinating historic estates, with beautiful gardens and unique accommodation in a truly memorable setting. The village is also home to the historic Weavers Cottages, a reminder of the area's rich weaving heritage.

Trailhead: Marley Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin

Distance/Time: Total length 131 km. Tinahely – Clonbeg approx. 19km / 5–6 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Terrain: Forest tracks, woodland paths, quiet country roads and farmland trails

To suit: Experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

Map: The Wicklow Way by EastWest Mapping www.eastwestmapping.ie and Tailte Éireann map 56 and 62 www.tailte.ie

Type of trail: National Waymarked Trail – yellow arrow on black background

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



Bahana Forest Loop Walk

Bahana Forest takes its name from the Irish word “Beitheanna”, meaning a place of birch trees. This route covers a distance of 4.5km along forest paths and the River Barrow towpath. Saint Moling founded a monastery here in the seventh century, which the Vikings sailed up in the tenth century to raid and destroy. The very impressive ruins of a fourteenth century abbey can be visited on the upper settlement. Adjacent to the monastic site is a well preserved motte and bailey, a large grassy hillock (the motte) which was the site of a twelfth century Norman fortification.

- A-B** Leave the car park adjacent to the Mullicháin Café and follow the towpath along the river with the River Barrow on your left. After approx. 15 minutes, follow a canal away from the river to reach St. Mullins Sea Lock. The River Barrow is one of the great ancient highways of Ireland’s Ancient East, offering a route inland from the Irish Sea at Waterford Harbour. Shallow bottomed boats were required for many centuries until a series of canals and locks were constructed to facilitate the passage of larger boats. It was in St Mullins that the building of the canal system first began in the late 18th century.
- B-C** Continue by the canal to reach a track junction. Turn right uphill to reach a crossroads where you turn left on the main track.
- C-D** Reach a three-way junction and keep left to follow the forest road back down towards the river.
- D** Reach a lower track and turn sharp left to arrive back down at the towpath on the River Barrow, noting a lime kiln on your left side. Lime kilns were commonly used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to burn lime stone rock in order to derive lime, which in turn was spread on the land to increase productivity. Turn left and follow the towpath back downstream with the river on your right. Soon the canal leaves the river and follow the towpath to reach your outward route.

Type of trail: Local loop walk

Trailhead: Car park at St. Mullins Quay

Distance/Time: 4.5km (approx 1 hour)

Difficulty: Easy

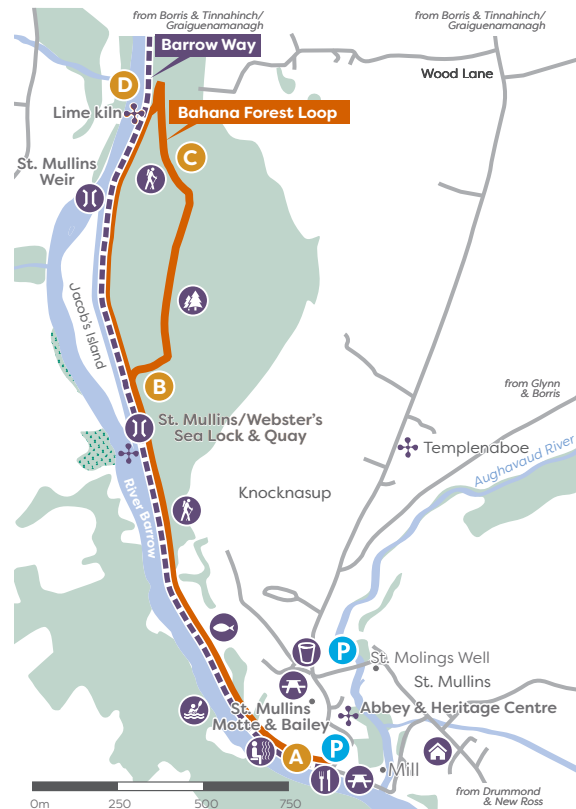
Terrain: River towpaths and forestry track

To suit: Beginner or experienced walker

Minimum gear: Hiking boots, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping
www.eastwestmapping.ie

Emergency Services: 999 / 112



Finish your walk with a well-earned treat at the Mullicháin Café (seasonal February – October), the perfect place to relax and refuel. For a deeper sense of relaxation, the nearby Heron Sauna (seasonal) offers a unique riverside experience – soothing tired muscles in the heat before stepping out to the refreshing waters of the River Barrow.



Gowlin Forest Walk



Type of trail: Local loop walk

Trailhead: At entrance to Gowlin Forest near Ballybeg Crossroads on the road to Ballymurphy

Services: Pub in Glynn Village (7km), café and pub in St Mullins (9km)

Distance/Time:

2 and 4.2km / 45 minutes to 1.25 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Forestry track

To suit: Beginner or experienced walker

Minimum gear: Hiking boots, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping www.eastwestmapping.ie

Emergency Services: 999/112

The name of this wood, walk and nearby settlement is Gowlin, pronounced Goolin locally. The name is derived from the Irish word 'guala' or 'gualainn', meaning a shoulder. This walk covering a distance of 4.2km also features large plantations of Sitka Spruce and Lodgepole Pine.

The 4.2km walk starts at the car park at the entrance to Gowlin Forest. From the lower car park at the public road, follow the forest road as it climbs steadily uphill and around a large zig zag bend. The forest road levels out and reaches the upper car parking area at a junction. And as you climbed up the hill and onto the level ground, you have ascended up onto a great shoulder or spur jutting out from the main ridge of the Blackstair Mountains. It's this afforested spur that gives it's name to the area. Fabulous views of the South Blackstairs and Barrow Valley are on offer here. The upper car parking area is located at a forest road junction with great views north to Mount Leinster. Keep your eyes peeled and you may well see deer flitting away, squirrels climbing trees or the kestrel or increasingly common buzzard circling the skies and feral goats living wild on the mountain slopes. The alternative walk of 2km is reached by driving up the forest road to the carpark at the forest road junction.



An Bád Keppel

There is no better way to experience the timeless beauty of the River Barrow than from the deck of An Bád Keppel. Drift quietly along the historic navigation through Bagenalstown as the river reveals its wildlife, heritage and peaceful scenery at an unhurried pace. Every bend tells a story, from the engineering of the canal to the people whose lives were shaped by the river over generations. Operated by knowledgeable local volunteers who are deeply passionate about this special place, An Bád Keppel offers visitors the opportunity to discover one of County Carlow's most remarkable visits. Operates seasonally from May – September.



Bagenalstown Trip Boat, The Quay, Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow

T: 089 974 8127 **E:** bookings@bagenalstowntripboat.com
bagenalstowntripboat.com



Clashganny Forest Looped Walks

Clashganny Forest Trails offer the user gentle walks on forest roads and along the Barrow Way with magnificent views of Clashganny Lock and the River Barrow.

Clashganny Lock Loop

- A-B** This walk is signposted by green arrows. Walk from the Clashganny Lock car park towards the River Barrow and keep left, following the river downstream. The old towpath that you are following is wide and easy to follow and is marked by both green (this walk), purple (Clashganny Viewing Point Loop) and yellow (Barrow Way) arrows. After a short distance, follow the canal until you reach Ballykeenan Lock.
- B-C** Shortly after this, follow the green arrow and take a sharp left back uphill on a forest road. After 50m follow the green arrow to turn left again onto the narrow forest track. This delightful forest path, rugged in places, runs through deciduous woodland with glimpses to the river below. It will take you on a parallel line back upriver. Near the end, the path descends by an old mass rock and joins the tarmac road below.
- C-A** Turn left to return the short distance to the car park.

Clashganny Viewing Point Loop

- A-B** The walk is signposted with purple arrows and starts at the Clashganny Viewing Point carpark. Walk downhill from the car park, following a forest track. This track descends for a kilometre, reach a Y-junction where you veer right and downhill towards the River Barrow.
- B-C** After a short distance, follow the purple arrow and take a right turn onto a narrow forest path. This delightful rugged path, narrow in places, runs through deciduous woodland with glimpses of the river below. After 2km, the path descends by an old mass rock and joins the tarmac road below.
- C-D** Turn left now and follow the road down to the main Clashganny car park and the river. Walk through the car park and follow the river downstream. After a short distance, you will reach Ballykeenan Lock, where the canal re-enters the river.
- D-A** Shortly after this, follow the purple arrow to turn sharp left and back uphill on a forest track. You now rejoin your earlier route and follow the forest track back uphill to the Clashganny Viewing Point car park.



Trailhead: Clashganny car park

Services: Public facilities and picnic tables on site. Evening dining options, Thurs-Sat and Sunday lunch available in Clashganny House Restaurant, 0.3km

Distance/Time: Lock Loop: 4km/1 ½ hours and Viewing Point Loop: 6km/2 hours

Definition of grade: Easy

Terrain: Road, track and river towpath

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

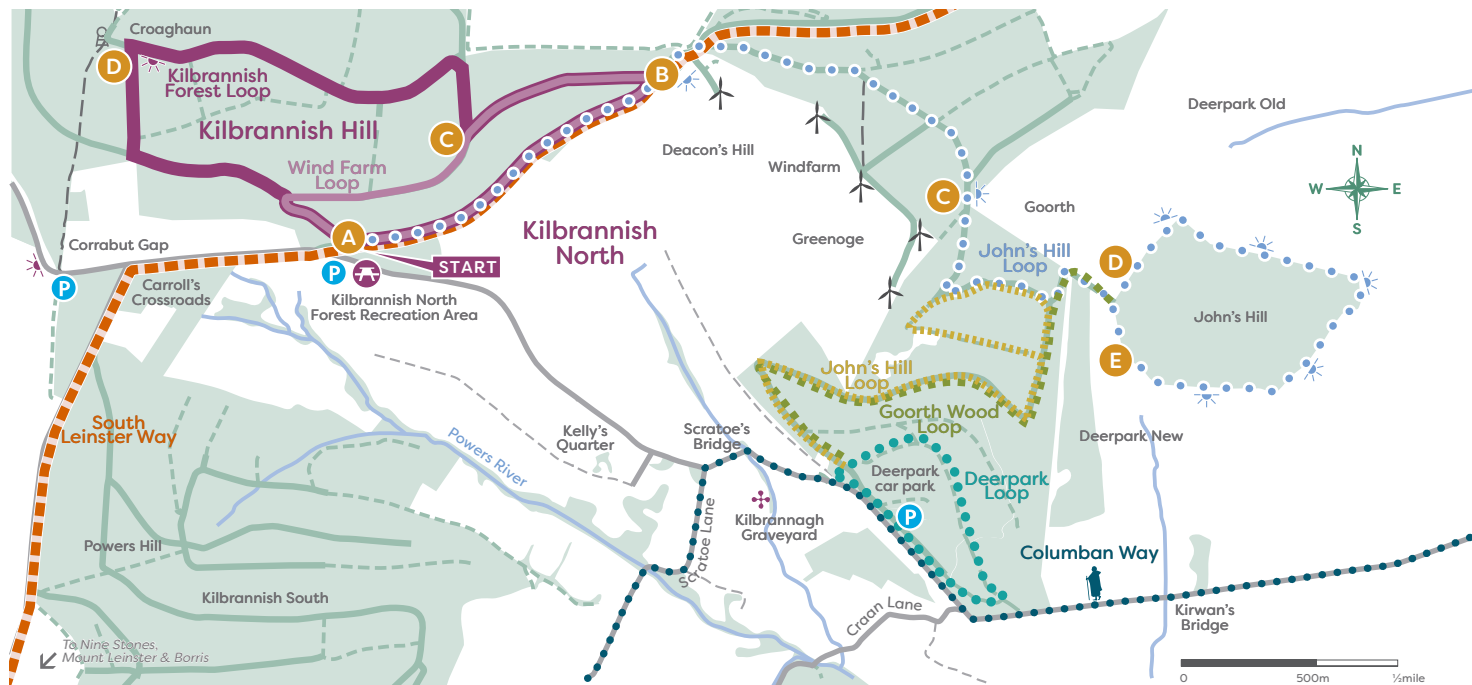
Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: Local looped walk – marked with green and purple arrows

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



Kilbrannish Forest North & Deerpark Loop Walks



Trailhead: Kilbrannish Forest North Recreation car park and Deerpark car park

Services: Car park, picnic area

Distance/Time: Kilbrannish Forest North – Windfarm Loop 3.1km (1 hr); Kilbrannish Forest Loop 5.3km (1hr 40 min); John's Hill Loop 11km (3 hrs). **Deerpark –** Deerpark Loop 1.8km (40 minutes); Goorth Wood Loop 5.5km (1 hr 30mins); John's Hill Loop 8km (2 hr 30mins).

Difficulty: The Windfarm Loop (easy), The Kilbrannish Forest, John's Hill Loop (strenuous), Deerpark Loop (easy), Goorth Wood Loop (moderate).

Terrain: Forest road, track

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers, Windfarm Loop, Kilbrannish Forest Loop and Deerpark Loop suitable for large wheeled buggies.

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

Type of trail: Local loop walk. Windfarm Loop (green arrows); Kilbrannish Forest Loop (purple arrows); John's Hill (green arrows).

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping www.eastwestmapping.ie

Emergency Services: 999 or 112



Kilbrannish Forest North & Deerpark Loop Walks

Deerpark

Discover Deerpark, the newest walking destination on the Blackstairs Mountains, where a range of trails offer something for every level of walker. The family-friendly Deerpark Loop (1.8km) provides a gentle introduction to the area, while the Goorth Wood Loop (5.5km) explores tranquil woodland and scenic countryside. For those seeking a longer adventure, John's Hill Loop (8km) rewards walkers with spectacular mountain views over the Carlow and Wexford countryside.



Windfarm Loop

A-B A steep path leads up from the rear of the car park to reach a forest road. Walk uphill to the right along the forest road, passing a forest road junction to the left. The walk climbs gently uphill with views to your right to farmland and the windfarm on Greenoge Hill.

B-C Reach a forest road junction near the top of the rise and turn left. The road continues to climb gently to reach another junction. The surrounding coniferous forest is mainly planted with sitka spruce and lodgepole pine.

C-A Turn left now, leaving the Kilbrannish Forest Loop. The road soon starts to descend gently to reach a forest road junction below. Turn left again to return the short distance to the car park.

Kilbrannish Forest Loop

A-B As per the Windfarm Loop.

B-C Reach a forest road junction near the top of the rise and turn left. The road continues to climb gently to reach another junction, where you turn right, leaving the Windfarm Loop. Continue to a triangular forest road junction. Turn left again and continue uphill to reach the summit of Croaghaun Hill.

C-D Retrace your steps for a minute from the summit of Croaghaun and now turn right down a steep track. Enjoy the views across the valley. On reaching the forest road at the bottom, turn left and then right at the next junction to return to the car park (A).

Johns Hill Loop

A-B Follow the path straight up from the car park. Turn right and follow the forest road uphill towards a small windfarm. This part of the walk is shared with two other loop walks, the Windfarm Loop and Kilbrannish Forest Loop as well as the South Leinster Way.

B-C Reach the top of the rise. Passing the sub-station, keep right at the fork of forest roads and start climbing uphill. The road descends gently to reach a stretch of power line.

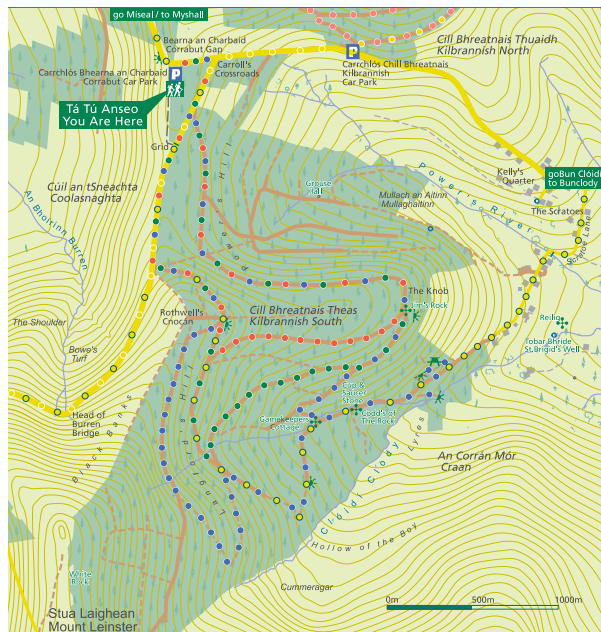
C-D Pass under the power line and follow the forest road more steeply downhill. Reach a junction and swing around to the left. At the next T-junction, keep left again and follow the forest road to emerge from the forest at a corner. Keep right and follow the track across to John's Hill.

D-E At the entrance to John's Hill you will face a large boulder and a picnic table. Keep right at this junction. Now continue on this track with a fence on your left and the plantation on your right. The track narrows to a path but keeps mostly to the forest edge. Further round the hill, there are fine views down to the town of Bunclody.

E-A The path makes a full circuit of John's Hill and rejoins at Point D above. Return by your outward route.



Kilbrannish Forest South Loop Walks



The Short Loop

The shortest loop walk initially follows the tar road towards the Nine Stones before entering the forest to reach a large crossroads of forest tracks. The route then descends downhill before passing Jim's Rock, from where fantastic views of the countryside can be enjoyed. After Jim's Rock turn right and continue on to a T-junction, turn right and continue on to the Nine Stones road. Turn right and continue down the tarred road to a T-junction at Carroll's Cross Road, turn left here for the Corrabut Gap car park and trail head map board.

Trailhead: Carpark at Corrabut Gap

Services: Car park

Distance/Time: Short Loop 6.5km (2 hrs), Medium Loop 7.3km (2.5 hrs) and Long Loop 11.1km (4 hrs)

Difficulty: Short and Medium Loop (moderate), Long Loop (strenuous)

Terrain: Forest road, track

To suit: Short & Medium – beginner or experienced walkers, Long Loop experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping
www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: Short Loop – red arrows, Medium Loop – green arrows and Long Loop – blue arrows

Emergency Services: 999/112

The Medium Loop

The Medium Loop offers a more extended forest walk, branching off from the Short Loop route at Jim's Rock before descending deeper into the woodland. At the Y junction keep right and continue until you come to a T junction and turn right. Follow the forest road, ignoring right and left turns, until you reach the Nine Stones Road. Turn right and continue down the tarred road as above to reach Corrabut Gap.

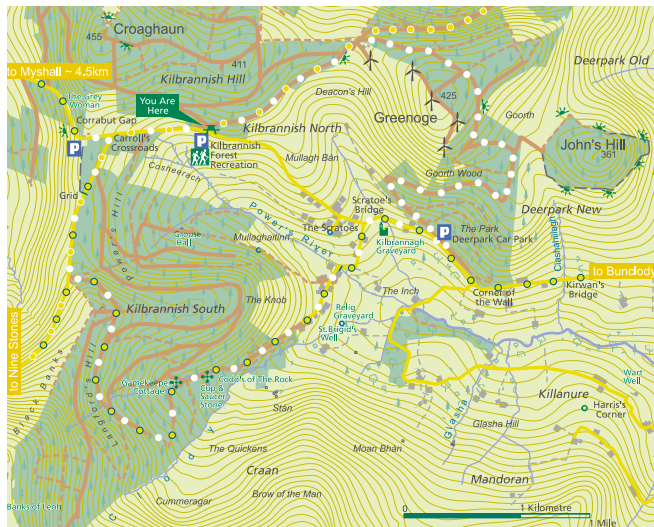
The Long Loop

The long, looped walk, branches off from the short route at Jim's Rock before descending by historic landmarks including the Gamekeeper's Cottage. Keep left and continue onto the Cup and Saucer and Codd's of the Rock and nearby picnic tables. The route then returns by these historical landmarks. At the junction of the Game Keepers Cottage there is a steady climb uphill until you reach the Nine Stones Road. Turn right and continue down the tarred road as above to reach Corrabut Gap.

Walkers will be rewarded with particularly fine views at several locations around the route, where well-placed picnic tables provide the perfect opportunity to relax and take in the beautiful vistas.



Kilbrannish North to South Loop Walk



Trailhead: Carpark at Kilbrannish Forest North Recreation Area

Services: Car park and picnic area

Distance/Time: 14km (4 hours)

Difficulty: Strenuous

Terrain: Forest road, track and country lanes

To suit: Experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

Map: The Blackstairs and Mount Leinster by EastWest Mapping www.eastwestmapping.ie

Type of trail: Local loop walk - orange arrows

Emergency Services: 999/112

The Kilbrannish Trail is a rewarding circular walk linking the Kilbrannish North and Kilbrannish South forests, combining peaceful woodland, panoramic mountain views, local history and impressive renewable energy landmarks.

Beginning at the Corrabut Gap car park the trail follows yellow markers with the white arrow in the centre. The route descends down the steep tarred road before entering Kilbrannish Forest North car park. The route initially climbs gently through commercial forests of Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine towards one of the region's earliest wind farms. Developed by the Deacon family in 2005, these turbines were among the first erected in the area.

As the trail continues, there are fine views across the surrounding countryside, including towards John's Hill before the forest road descends in a series of sweeping bends to the Deerpark car park. Leaving this car park turn right and continue to Scratoes Bridge. After a brief uphill climb take the first left down Scratoes Lane, a quiet cul de sac and cross over a small bridge. Continue on past several houses to enter Kilbrannish Forest South.

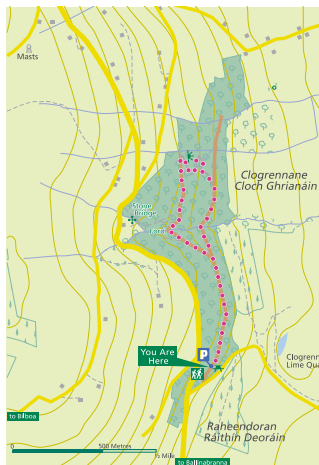
Follow the road uphill for twenty minutes – watch out for several fascinating heritage features including the Cup and Saucer on your left. This large square shaped granite boulder lies on a flat pancake shaped rock, the saucer. Nearby lies the remains of the homestead of Codd's of the Rock, occupied until the 1930s and the ruins of a former game keepers cottage recalling a time when these woodlands formed part of the Hall-Dare Estate.

Beyond the cottage, the forest road climbs steadily to the road leading towards the Nine Stones. Turning right, walkers are rewarded with views across the dramatic bowl-shaped valley of Coolasnaghtna, whose Irish name, Cúl a' Sneachta ("Corner of the Snows"), reflects its reputation for holding snow long after it has disappeared elsewhere.

From Carrolls Cross Roads take a left turn returning to Corrabut Gap car park and trail head sign, completing an enjoyable circuit through one of County Carlow's most varied forest landscapes.



Clogrennan Forest Loop Walk



Clogrennan Forest near Carlow Town offers the user a gentle sloping 4km walk on forest roads with magnificent views of Carlow Town and the River Barrow on a clear day. The area is an old wood and has had forestry cover present since the 1800s. The predominant tree species in Clogrennan are beech, spruce, larch and oak with vegetation consistent with that of an old woodland – bluebell, ferns, wild garlic and herb rocket. This is a really popular spot for visitors seeking a relaxing walk close to Carlow Town.

Trailhead: Carpark at Clogrennan Forest

Services: Car park and picnic area

Distance/Time: 4km (1 – 1.5 hours)

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Forest road and track

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

Maps: Tailte Éireann map 61 www.tailte.ie

Type of trail: Local loop walk – purple arrows

Emergency Services: 999/112



Oak Park Forest Loop



Situated on the outskirts of Carlow Town, Oak Park Forest Park is an oasis of tranquillity and a popular destination for walkers and joggers. The park is a mature, mixed species woodland of over 120 acres with a predominance of beech, oak, scots pine, silver fir, larch and sycamore. Extending to 4.3km, this loop centres on a shallow man-made lake with islands, on the grounds of the Oak Park estate. The walks include Butlers Wood Loop (700m), The Lake Path, Fox Covert Trail (1,100m) and Lost Forest Trail (1,100m). This habitat shelters many wild and game birds, swans and ducks.

Trailhead: Carpark at Oak Park Forest Park

Services: Car park, picnic area, universally accessible playground and outdoor fitness zone

Distance/Time: 4.3km (1 – 1.5 hours)

Difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Forest road and track

To suit: Beginner or experienced walkers

Minimum gear: Suitable walking footwear, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

Type of trail: Local loop walk

Emergency Services: 999/112

Carlow's Big Houses and Estates

Some of County Carlow's most beautiful walks are found within its magnificent heritage estates. Wander through centuries of history as woodland paths, landscaped parklands, walled gardens and riverside trails reveal some of Ireland's finest historic houses. Check for opening times and entry fees (if applicable).



Altamont Gardens

Regarded as one of Ireland's finest gardens, Altamont Gardens offers visitors a memorable walking experience through over 40 acres of beautifully designed gardens and parkland. Wander through colourful herbaceous borders, tranquil woodlands and magnificent collections of trees before following winding paths down to the peaceful banks of the River Slaney. The return walk gently climbs back through the estate, via ninety nine steps, revealing ever-changing views across the gardens and surrounding landscape.

Address: Tullow, Co. Carlow, R93 N882

T: 046 940 7175

E: altamontgardens@opw.ie
www.heritageireland.ie



Duckett's Grove Historic House and Walled Gardens

The romantic ruins of Duckett's Grove provide the backdrop for one of County Carlow's most enjoyable heritage walks. Explore the beautifully restored Victorian walled gardens before following gentle pathways through the surrounding parkland and woodland. Along the way, discover ornamental features, mature trees, colourful seasonal planting and magnificent views of the dramatic gothic revival mansion. Ideal for families and casual walkers alike, Duckett's Grove is a wonderful place to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the outdoors.

Address: Kneestown, Co. Carlow R93 RF80

T: 059 913 0411

E: info@carlowtourism.com
www.carlowgardentrail.com



Huntington Castle and Gardens

Set within one of Ireland's oldest continuously inhabited castles, which dates to 1625, the walks at Huntington Castle offer a fascinating journey through history, woodland and beautifully maintained gardens. Stroll beneath ancient trees and formal gardens, explore peaceful riverside walks in the wilderness area and discover enchanting features including the renowned 500-year old Yew Walk, ponds and hidden corners full of character. The bottom of the wilderness is marked by the River Derry which flows as the boundary between County Carlow and Wexford.

Address: Huntington Castle and Gardens, Clonegal, Co. Carlow, Y21 K237

T: 053 937 7160

E: info@huntingtoncastle.com
www.huntingtoncastle.com

Swimming Pools



Bagenalstown Swimming Pool

Bagenalstown Swimming Club is a long established voluntary club located in idyllic surroundings adjacent to the River Barrow. An ideal destination for all age groups to enjoy swimming activities in geo-thermally heated pools. Facility is equipped with a hydraulic chair for disability access to the pool. The club also offers swimming lessons, summer camps, water safety classes, river races and swimming galas. Seasonal membership and casual rates available. Open from early June – late August.

Leighlinbridge Road,
Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow
R21 RR72

T: 059 915 8860

E: bagenalstownswimming1947club@gmail.com

Please check the Facebook page for opening times



Graiguecullen Swimming Pool

Located in Graiguecullen, facilities include a 25 metre deck level heated pool, a spacious heated toddler pool, sauna and steam room, family changing cubicles, coffee shop and free car parking. Disability facilities include showers, toilets, changing area and pool hoist.

Check the Facebook page for the latest timetable.

Leighlin Road, Graiguecullen,
Carlow, R93 N5Y0

T: 059 914 0330

E: cgswwimmingpool@gmail.com
www.graiguecullenkilleshin.com/st-fiaccs-swimming-pool



Talbot Fitness and Padel

Located within Talbot Hotel Carlow, Talbot Fitness is proud to offer one of the finest leisure facilities in the region. Featuring a 20-metre indoor swimming pool, state-of-the-art gym, jacuzzi, Scandinavian sauna, and steam room, with day pass options available, it is the perfect destination for fitness, relaxation, and wellbeing. Talbot Fitness is the only gym in Carlow Town and Graiguecullen offering pay-as-you-go access to a swimming pool, making it a unique choice for both local residents and visitors alike.

This is home to Carlow and Laois' first dedicated padel courts. Fast-paced, social and easy to learn, padel combines elements of tennis and squash, making it the perfect activity for friends, families, couples and groups of all fitness levels. Courts are available daily from 6am–10pm, easily booked through the Playtomic app. Rackets and balls are also available from Talbot Fitness Carlow, making it easy for beginners and visitors to get started.

Barrow Valley Business Park,
Sleaty Road, Graiguecullen,
Co. Laois, R93 Y504

T: 059 915 3000

E: info@talbothotelcarlow.ie
talbotcarlow.ie



Saunas



Heron Sauna

The Heron Sauna is a tranquil retreat nestled along the serene banks of the River Barrow in St. Mullins. The sauna offers a unique experience where the soothing sounds of nature and the waters of the river blend perfectly with the warmth of the sauna, creating a truly restorative escape.

The Quay, St Mullins, Co. Carlow
R95 XY93

E: heronsauna@gmail.com
www.heronsauna.com

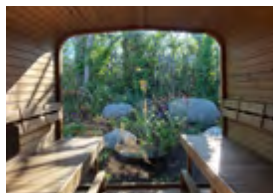


Hot Box Sauna

Immerse yourself in the wonderful experience of connecting the power of a traditional sauna with the raw beauty of an Irish river. Enjoy 45 minutes in the custom-built Finnish sauna situated in a restored old stone shed overlooking the River Barrow. The Hot Box Sauna offers a unique wellness experience that combines traditional sauna therapy with modern comfort. Prepare to unwind in a cosy sauna sanctuary and afterwards cool off with a refreshing plunge in the adjacent River Barrow.

The Quay, Tinnahinch, Co Carlow
R95 X635
(Waterways Ireland carpark)

T: 087 474 3143
E: info@thehotboxsauna.ie
www.thehotboxsauna.ie



Sol Sauna

Sol Sauna is a unique wellness destination in County Carlow, offering visitors the opportunity to slow down, reconnect and recharge through the restorative benefits of heat and cold therapy. Their thoughtfully designed facility features traditional saunas, invigorating cold plunge experiences and a wood-fired hot tub, creating the perfect environment for relaxation, recovery and wellbeing. Guests can enjoy individual changing cubicles, onsite toilet facilities and free parking, ensuring a comfortable and convenient experience from start to finish.

Strawhall Estate, Carlow,
R93 RX88

E: hello@solsauna.ie
www.solsauna.ie



Valhalla Sauna and Barrow Brew

Nestled along the tranquil banks of the River Barrow at Milford, Vallhalla Saunas invites visitors to slow down, reconnect with nature and embrace wellness. This family-run retreat offers an authentic riverside experience, pairing traditional hot and cold therapies in a peaceful woodland setting. Located beside the much-loved Barrow Brew Café, visitors can continue their experience with locally roasted coffee and homemade treats overlooking the Barrow Way.

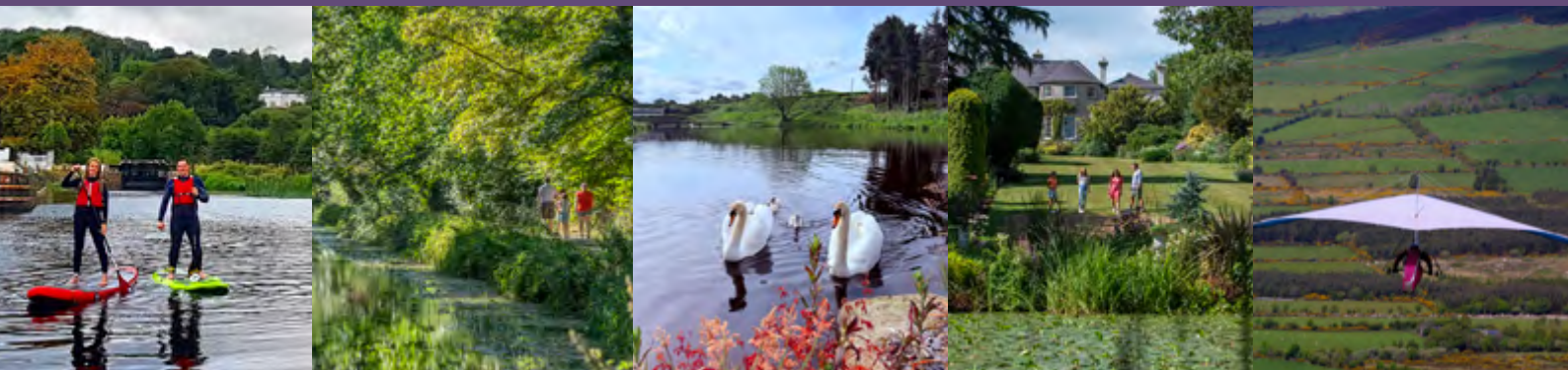
Milford Weir, Milford, Co. Carlow
Just 5 minutes from M9 Exit 6

086 170 4153 (WhatsApp)
E: valhallasaunas@hotmail.com
www.valhallasaunas.ie



Front cover photos left to right: Mount Leinster on the Blackstairs Mountains; Valhalla Sauna, Milford on the River Barrow; Cycling in St Mullins, with St Mullins Bike Hire; Go-With-The-Flow Canoeing near Clashganny, Borris.

Photos below left to right: SUP boarding with Pure Adventure at Tinnahinch on the River Barrow; Family walking at Milford, Barrow Way; Southern County Fishing Resort, Garryhill; Walking in Altamont Gardens, Tullow; Hang Gliding at The Nine Stones on the Blackstairs Mountains.



Visit us online at: www.carlowtourism.com

For further information on County Carlow, to make an accommodation booking or for transport assistance please contact:

Carlow Tourist Office, College Street, Carlow

T: +353 (0)59 913 0411 E: info@carlowtourism.com

Published in October 2026, this guide showcases the outdoor experiences available in Carlow at the time of printing. As visitor facilities, trail infrastructure and route information are continually being enhanced and updated, we recommend checking www.carlowtourism.com where changes will be incorporated into the online version of this guide.

The publishers gratefully acknowledge the assistance of public and private landowners and agencies involved in the provision and management of walking trails in the county including Waterways Ireland, Coillte, Teagasc and the National Trails Office. The publishers gratefully acknowledge photographic contributions. The publishers cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention future publications will be amended accordingly.

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